
Speech by H.E. Mr. Takuji Hanatani, Ambassador of Japan, at the Grant Contract Signing Ceremony of 9 Projects to be Funded Under Japan's Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) Programme

Friday, 11 March 2016, 2.30 p.m., at the Ministry of Finance Complex, Suva

Mr. Ledua Vakaloloma, Acting Chief Economic Planning Officer,
Ministry of Finance,

Distinguished Recipient Representatives,

Fiji Government Officials,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bula Vinaka, Namaste, Good Afternoon, and Konnichiwa.

First of all, I wish to convey the deepest sympathies of the government and people of Japan to the people of Fiji for the suffering caused by Tropical Cyclone Winston.

Today we have gathered here to sign Grant Contracts for nine projects and formalize Japan's assistance to the people of Fiji. I am pleased to say that the Government of Japan will be providing approximately One Million and Three Hundred Fifty Four Thousand Fiji Dollars (FJD 1.354M) through its Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects Programme or GGP in short.

These projects had been considered and approved before Cyclone Winston but I hope that the implementation of these

projects would contribute to the recovery of Fiji and to building more resilient communities.

As Fiji has just experienced its worst natural disaster on record, today, March 11th also marks the fifth year of the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake. More than eighteen thousand lives were lost by the disaster, not to mention the destruction of houses, infrastructure, manufacturing, agricultural and fisheries industries. That is why Japan understands well your suffering. That is why Japan wishes to extend not only emergency assistance, but also medium to long term assistance to build more resilient communities against possible natural disasters. The World Bank estimates that every dollar spent on prevention saves seven dollars spent in recovery costs.

We believe the key to disaster risk reduction is investing before disaster strikes. In March 2015, during the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Japan, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced a 'US Four Billion Dollar (USD 4bn) Fund' for global disaster risk reduction.

In Fiji, Japan has recently provided support for disaster management by way of assistance to the Fiji Meteorological Service (in 2015), rehabilitation of Fiji Broadcasting Corporation Medium Wave (AM) Radio Transmission (in 2015) and 'Planning of Nadi River Flood Control Structures', which is ongoing.

After providing emergency relief assistance in the immediate aftermath of Cyclone Winston, we have decided to extend up to Three Hundred Million Yen equivalent to Two Million Six Hundred Thousand US Dollars for Fiji's recovery.

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight that since 1990 Japan has been providing continued assistance to grassroots communities in Fiji through 341 GGP projects, with the total value exceeding US\$19 million.

In concluding, I am confident that the formalization of the nine GGP Projects today will further strengthen the friendship between the people and Governments of Japan and Fiji.

Vinaka Vakalevu, Dhanyavaadh, Thank You and Arigato Gozaimasu.

The End.